



## Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 11, 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed decision notice is for maintaining the existing 3-pasture rest-rotation cooperative grazing system on the Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area for a period of 9 years (2018-2026). FWP would allow spring and early summer (May 1- July 14) and early fall (September 15-30) grazing on Wall Creek WMA in cooperation with the USFS, BLM, DNRC, and local ranching partners as has occurred for the past 33 years. Livestock use of the WMA would vary annually from approximately 220 to 600 animal unit months depending on the annual rotation. The grazing association would pay for a grazing lease on the WMA as well as perform fence maintenance activities as outlined within Appendix A of the environmental assessment.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for September 9, 2017). The EA was mailed to the standard FWP Region 3 distribution list; legal notice was printed in the Montana Standard (Butte) newspaper. A draft EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/>. No written comment was received during the comment period.

Based on the Environmental Assessment, the public comments received, and benefits and risks associated with this project, it is my decision to go forward with Alternative B, the proposed action. I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area Grazing Lease Renewal  
Attn: Dean Waltee  
PO Box 758  
Sheridan, MT 59749  
Or e-mailed to: [dwaltee@mt.gov](mailto:dwaltee@mt.gov)

Thank your interest.

Sincerely,

Howard Burt  
Acting Region Three Supervisor



## **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Region Three  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Bozeman, MT 59718  
September 11, 2017  
Decision Notice for:

### **Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area Grazing Lease Renewal Draft Environmental Assessment**

#### **Proposed Action**

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) proposes to maintain the existing 3-pasture rest-rotation cooperative grazing system on the Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area for a period of 9 years (2018-2026). FWP would allow spring and early summer (May 1-July 14) and early fall (September 15-30) grazing on Wall Creek WMA in cooperation with the USFS, BLM, DNRC, and local ranching partners as has occurred for the past 33 years. Livestock use of the WMA would vary annually from approximately 220 to 600 animal unit months depending on the annual rotation. The grazing association would pay for a grazing lease on the WMA as well as perform fence maintenance activities as outlined within Appendix A of the environmental assessment.

The desire for a 9-year lease is to allow the grazing system to function for 3 complete grazing cycles. One cycle through a 3-pasutre rest-rotation system requires three years. The longer lease period is also desired at this point because no changes to the grazing system are being considered, and short lease cycles do not allow sufficient time to detect changes in rangeland health trend. Longer lease terms are desired by the livestock producers because of financial planning.

The Wall Creek Grazing Association members would be charged one-half the FWP standard grazing rate of \$24.00 per AUM and assume fence maintenance responsibilities outlined in Appendix A of the environmental assessment. The FWP standard grazing rate is subject to annual change.

#### **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on August 8, 2017. Public comments on the proposed project were taken through 5:00 pm on September 9, 2017. The EA was mailed to the standard FWP Region 3 distribution list and posted on the MFWP website.

### **Summary of Public Comment**

FWP received no public comments regarding either the proposed action or the no grazing alternative.

### **Summary of Comments supporting the proposed project: One (1) total.**

FWP received no public comments in support of the proposed action.

### **FWP Response:**

### **Summary of Comments opposing the proposed project: None (0) received.**

FWP received no public comments in opposition to the proposed action.

### **FWP Response:**

### **Decision**

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, Alternative B, as described in the Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area Grazing Lease Renewal Draft Environmental Assessment.



Howard Burt  
Acting Regional Fish & Wildlife Supervisor

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